

Camden Club-by-Club

Camden has 7 strip clubs

- Spearmint Rhino
- 3 Secrets (one license recently transferred' to 'Sophisticats')
- The Griffin
- Parkers
- The Red Rooms

Venus strip club was also operating until it apparently failed to renew its liquor license.

Not a single one of Camden's strip clubs has been closed by the council despite a policy that states none are appropriate anywhere in the borough.

This is despite a wealth of evidence as to the harm of the industry generally and specifically in Camden's clubs.

We outline the evidence of widespread license breaches and abuse, that cannot be prevented through regulation, on a club-by-club basis.

This includes hard evidence from undercover investigations into Camden's strip clubs, statements from former lap dancers in Camden's clubs and Camden residents.

Sexual Contact, Straddling, Pimps: Spearmint Rhino

Private Investigators



Undercover investigation in 2019 into Spearmint Rhino, Camden shows sexual contact, straddling and masturbation was standard in a lap dance. Women were also offering £600 'dances' and giving out their phone number.

The investigators' redacted report is available here: www.notbuyingit.org.uk/CamdenSRPIs

This evidence has been passed on to the Council which is currently investigating it.

This is happening in a club with 63 CCTV Cameras and constantly 'clean' Council checks. This is happening in the 'most respectable' strip chain in the country. This is happening under a Council which believes its strip trade is 'stringently regulated' and has been deemed 'gold standard' by researchers in the industry for its level of regulation and 'dancer welfare'.

This undercover investigation clearly exposes how the entire strip trade operates and circumvents every and all regulation. The fact that this is an industry-wide phenomenon is supported by similar investigations in half a dozen clubs and by 100 recorded incidences in 70 clubs UK wide (1/3 of the entire UK strip trade), despite the industry working hard to suppress all evidence of abuse: www.notbuyingit.org.uk/StripSleaze

As Camden Council already well knows, the Spearmint Rhino strip chain, particularly the Camden branch, has a 2 decade history of licensing breaches, prostitution and other criminal activity. This even includes a documented rape: www.notbuyingit.org.uk/Publications#SR



Sexual Contact & 'Hand Jobs' inside

Lines of Pimps call the lap dancers 'appetiser' & take punters to the 'after party'

Undercover Investigators

Private Investigators in another Camden club in 2019 exposed the club was operating as a *de facto* brothel. It was full of foreign, presumed trafficked women. There was extensive sexual contact and persistent offers of £200 'dances' (which would include 'hand jobs'). Pimps were lined up inside and out, who described the lap dancers as 'the appetiser' and were seeking to take the investigators to the 'after party' – the nearby brothel where many of the lap dancers were put to work.

The identify of this club has been anonymised at present. All relevant information has been handed over to the council who are currently investigating it (as, we hope, are the police).

The significant level of criminality and abuse at this club strongly undermines the SEV policy the council is seeking to introduce and strongly reiterates the need to introduce a genuine zero policy towards the entire strip trade with all clubs shut and all lap dancers supported out.

It also strongly indicates the level of licensing breaches and abuse that will be operating at Camden clubs across the board.

Abuse of Lap Dancers



**Clubs Always know when Council
'Inspections' are taking place**

Rachel worked at Secrets Euston

Anonymous Testimony from Witness X, woman formally working in lap dancing at this club:

Harassment/Assault/Licensing Breaches:

"Harassment and assault **happen regularly** as does breach of the distance rule.

Security guards in Secrets Euston are directly ordered by management **not to intervene** when high paying customers assault or harass dancers. In fact, a dancer was sacked for slapping a customer who sexually assaulted her. This kind of 'non intervention' is absolutely standard across the industry."

Inadequacy of Security Checks

"None of the rule breaching, harassment or assault would be seen on security checks unless conducted **genuinely undercover** because management ensure dancers abide by rules when inspectors are present.

Every time there was a check in Secrets Euston, the **club manager was fully aware/warned** of the inspection before it happened and ensured we all put on a 'clean act'. This again, is normal across the strip trade."

Changing Management to Avoid Responsibility

"I think clubs often regularly change management to avoid responsibility; to be honest management don't really have much power as the real ones pulling the strings are the crime syndicates who run the premises."

Layout

"I am not sure what the camera arrangement is here but I'm pretty certain there are deliberate blind spots:

- on the upper level giving "naughty forties" - a lap dance for £40 instead of the advertised £20 which includes the promise of a **closer proximity** eg: brushing breasts in the face of customers - some dancers took this further and allowed customers to touch them sexually. They took/take place in specific booths and it was made apparent by dancers the best booth to do "naughty forties" was situated next to the champagne lounge on the upper level.

- The champagne lounge was where **a lot of touching** took place in a discreet manner (customers expected this due to the high price tag). This was usually when dancers went alone with a customer as opposed to going in a group - it's for this reason I rarely chose to go in the champagne lounge without other dancers present as we would work together to deter/distract the customer from touching us.
- Also note that A LOT of **fraud** went on at this level as often the price for champagne lounge would be completely pulled out of the air depending on how much we thought the customer would pay. Waiters worked with management and house mums to enter very high sums of money into the card machine whilst taking the customers card out of view to do this. They would then return and move the card machine screen on to the pin entry so that the amount entered can not be seen. Often customers are drunk and trust the price quoted to be what is entered, often it is not.
- **The VIP suite** is situated on the basement level. I don't believe there to be **any CCTV** here and it is extremely dark. They did refurbish this and cease it's use for a while, apart from the occasional trusted dancer who had extra privilege who was allowed to use it. (I'm guessing because the council told them to stop using the area) I've known/heard of dancers giving **blow jobs/hand jobs** here and management turning a **blind eye** as the area is unsupervised. **Bribes** were made to waiters, house mum and management to allow dancers to work in the VIP and earn a lot more money.
- I Don't think they allowed **full sex** as this would be too obvious and I did hear of one dancer who was sacked for having sex with a customer in the VIP suite.”

“All of the above is true across the industry. CCTV has countless blind spots - these are often pointed out to performers. It can also be wiped and 'go missing'. Security is often complicit in 'rule breaking' – dancers frequently bribe them to turn a blind eye (as it is only by rule breaking or performing sex acts that they can make real money) or they are commanded to by management.”

Pimps



Witnesses have spoken of pimps posing as cabbies outside Red Rooms and Secrets and strip club staff being complicit in this. Touting is already noted as an ongoing problem in association with Camden's strip clubs. This information was passed onto the Council some time ago. We are not aware that either the Council or the police have acted on it.

Witness X:

Pimps regularly visit, loiter and attend secrets Euston. It is a huge problem. They are looking for dancers who are still going strong at the end of the night, particularly non-UK girls – as these are the easiest to then drag into full blown prostitution due to lack of a support network or even good English.

Abuse of Other Women

Witness X:

Euston is made a no go zone for women and children after approx 8/9pm as Secrets has attracted anti-social behaviour including alcohol, drug use, street harassment, violence and I'm sure the crime stats would show this.

Testimonies from Other Women:



The image shows a screenshot of three tweets from November 9th. The first tweet is from Rachel Ann Rees, replying to @mistybuttons and @not_buyingit, stating that 'Secrets five on Evershot Street near Euston is another' and mentioning 'Rank' and 'estate/school'. The second tweet is from TheGroganatorXX (@mistybuttons), replying to @RachelAnnRees1 and @not_buyingit, describing the area as a 'no go zone' and mentioning 'church and a housing estate and schools', as well as a 'Clear breach of Public Sector Equality Duty'. The third tweet is from Rachel Ann Rees, replying to @not_buyingit, @mistybuttons, and 14 others, calling the place 'absolutely Rank' and 'Awful place'.

Rachel Ann Rees · Nov 9
Replying to @mistybuttons @not_buyingit and 14 others
Secrets five on Evershot Street near Euston is another. Again u should see the clientele who go there. Rank. Plus it's near an estate/school.
2 1

TheGroganatorXX @mistybuttons · Nov 9
Replying to @RachelAnnRees1 @not_buyingit and 14 others
I know it too - used to cross the street to avoid it when I lived there. You just feel so powerless and demeaned even seeing these places. Plus it's next to a church and a housing estate and schools.
Clear breach of Public Sector Equality Duty.
2 1 7

Rachel Ann Rees · Nov 9
Replying to @not_buyingit @mistybuttons and 14 others
That place is absolutely Rank. You should see the clientele that go there!
Awful place.
1 3

VENUS

Abuse of Lap Dancers



**I worked in strip clubs across London.
Camden's 'Venus' was by far the worst**

Former Lap Dancer

A woman formally in lap dancing who has worked in numerous London clubs has testified that Venus was the worst club she worked in.

This club is no longer operating – but this is not thanks go any intervention by the Council

Abuse of Other Women and Girls

Testimony of Jennifer:

“Venus was on the road in my shopping area.

If I needed to go to Tesco I had to consider whether to take the long way around and so avoid passing the club or to take the short way and endure the humiliation of passing this club.

The bouncers and male staff would be standing outside chatting and laughing and watching every woman who passed.

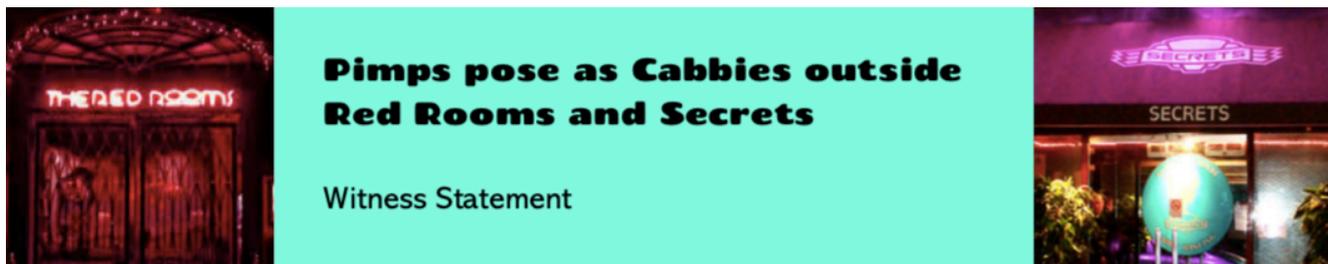
There would be female performers outside, presumably on smoke breaks. In contrast to the suited and booted men they would be barely clothed, in painful-looking high heels and hugging themselves in a way that conveyed they were perished on winter nights.

At other times I would cross the road so as not to have to pass the club.

In addition, coming home from work at 9pm approx. I would see a group of ‘taxi’ drivers at the end of my street, who were touting for business from the club. These men would be saying things as I passed - I just scurried past with as much dignity as I could muster and ignored them.

Two of my neighbours had 13 year old girls who were never allowed to walk past this club, so they therefore completely altered their route to shops etc in order to avoid their young children having to experience the situation.”

Red Rooms



Pimps

Witnesses have testified to pimps posing as cabbies outside Red Rooms and Secrets and strip club staff being complicit in this. Touting is already noted as an ongoing problem in association with Camden's strip clubs.

This email was sent to us some time ago by a member of the public, which we immediately passed on to Camden Council. We are not aware that either the Council or the police have acted on it.

Hi,

Just thought I'd let you know that outside **Red Rooms**, there are a **number pimps/ touts** almost always present near the entrances and security never ask them to move when some are stood less than a metre from the entrance. I have heard them dicussing 'oral', prices, & times & have video evidence of one walking a punter to a flat a few minutes walk away.

When security turn a blind-eye to what they are doing, seem friendly towards the pimps, one pimp even calling security by his name. It makes me wonder if the pimps could be tipping the club?

They also are friendly with Westminster quiet streets staff. The pimps mostly walk along **Kingsway** where a minute walk away **Secrets** the other strip club is. Their pretty good front is that they are minicab drivers and 'minicab' seems to be code for inticing men who want to buy sex. A pimp then leads the man to follow him to a flat, not a minicab. When men actually want a minicab they point then to a black cab in the road. It is quite a good front and I didn't see it for a few years.

There is a big sign warning punters not to use unlicensed minicabs outside secrets. However, the men posing as unlicensed minicab drivers are never told to move & constintantly there all the time the club is open.

On Kingsway at the entrace of **Secrets** in a dead end road, there can be up to **12 touts at a time just standing there and talking to punters as they exit and Secrets** security do nothing about it either.

My concern is if the clubs are getting money from these pimps or the clubs themselves are linked to these brothels a few minutes walk away.

Thanks.

Abuse of Lap Dancers

We have had numerous reports from women from the strip trade that Red Rooms is a hub for prostitution and trafficking. At the 2019 licensing hearing for this club, with management stating 'dances' were £200, it is hard to imagine how this could not be the case. Management also confirmed there were very few customers - it would therefore appear a variety of criminal activity must be sustaining the club.

Written statements from Club lap dancers (in perfect English despite the overwhelming majority being of non-UK descent) stated that they often didn't even take their clothes off, wore 2 pairs of knickers and predominantly worked as 'counsellors' for punters.

In our experience, such testimonies clearly suggest the club's lap dancers are operating under an extreme level of coercion by club operators.

Parkers



Parkers - Touts, Intimidation Credit Card fraud, Prostitution

Numerous Trip Advisor Reviews

Numerous trip advisor reviews (now incontrovertibly proven in many cases to be the most reliable source of information about the strip trade) point to considerable illegal activity ranging from prostitution, credit card fraud and touting.

At the 2019 licensing hearing for this strip club, Management claimed that it had very few customers (mostly barristers) – again raising questions as to how it is financially sustainable. The club also made extraordinary assertions that lap dancers were like 'Go Go Girls' and stayed '2 foot' away from customers even during private dances and appeared horrified at the suggestion that they might even 'bend over'. It's legal team shouted 'it's just dancing, it's just dancing'.

Testimonies were reeled out from current lap dancers stating the club was a 'big happy family'.

In our experience, such extraordinary claims from all sides is a clear indicating of a significant level of coercion operating at this club.

The Griffin

Abuse of Women

Testimony of local resident, Jennifer:



Men pay just £1 for women to strip naked at lunchtime

“ a pub with blacked out windows and an air of real seediness and menace. Here only bouncers were ever seen outside - never the women. The bouncers being v big and muscly, had an air of intimidation and nonchalance. They would be perched on stools outside reading their phones casually, as if they owned the whole street and we were the ones who were encroaching on their territory. There was a feeling that this place was a no woman’s land. I always crossed the street while passing this place”

Across Camden Clubs

An undercover journalist, Samantha Rea, has exposed the constant licensing breaching, harassment, sex acts (blow jobs/hand jobs), assault, drugs and drug dealing across the industry. The clubs she reports on were predominantly in Camden and Westminster.

[bold and headings are added by Not Buying It]

Independent 2018

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/presidents-club-sexual-harassment-business-lap-dance-vip-exploitation-a8177691.html>

I've spent the last three months .. working undercover in eight different lap dancing clubs in London. .. attendees tend to be well-off men, and those working there are usually young women, many of whom are at university or supporting children, and often from poorer countries.

At the lap dancing clubs, I witnessed **men grabbing women's bums, breasts, and genitals while sitting there rubbing their erections through their trousers**. I was on the receiving end of this myself.

For although the licensing laws forbid touching, the women's financial instability meant the men were able to push the boundaries. Working on a self-employed basis and having paid the club a fee to work there, the women are effectively pitted against each other to compete for custom. Under pressure to earn money (and to make back the "house fee" which could be up to £85) straying hands were often tolerated in an effort to keep the customer. And in more than one club, I was shown the camera "**blind spots**" where licensing laws are flouted with impunity.

Propositioning

.. In the lap dancing clubs, I was **repeatedly propositioned by customers** who asked me to join them in their hotel rooms. They were not ambiguous about what they wanted. One asked me specifically, "**how much for a f***?**" **Another was willing to pay for VIP if it ended in a blow job.**

VIP is where the money's really made, with some clubs in central London charging upwards of £500 an hour for a customer to spend one-to-one time with a lap dancer in private. Typically, the women take home around two-thirds of this after the club take their cut. So if a customer spent several hours in VIP, it was possible for the woman to take home over £1,000. **However, it wasn't unusual for customers to make it clear that if they paid for VIP, they'd expect sex or a blow job at the end of it.**

When I turned down a guy who wanted a blow job, he said he'd give VIP a miss – then he casually told his work mates he was leaving as he wanted to go and get "sucked off". He was a Mayfair based lawyer in his 50s, out for his work Christmas drinks.

There were businessmen, sales directors and – creepily – a gynaecologist. In one club, a surgeon told me he'd heard about the place from guys at work. He'd finished a shift and wanted to relieve some stress. Another guy was a partner at one of the Big Four accounting firms, out entertaining a client.

How do I know who these men were and what they did for a living? Because **when I wouldn't give them my contact details, they'd insist on giving me theirs**. I exchanged messages with the Big Four guy, via his work email address.

One of the lap dancing clubs that I investigated was actually linked to an event very similar to the Presidents Club Charity Dinner. The club paid lap dancers to work as hostesses at a men-only black tie charity boxing

dinner at a central London hotel. The men – who paid £250 a ticket for ringside seats – were encouraged to follow on to the club, to join the lap dancers in VIP once their hostessing duties had ended.

MP Maria Miller has condemned the Presidents Club Charity Dinner, saying: “How seriously is business taking equality at work if they are still using men only events for entertainment?” She’s suggested that the event could be a catalyst for tightening equality law. This can only be a good thing. But I hope that the Presidents Club Charity Dinner isn’t made a scapegoat, only for similar events to continue slipping through the net, along with “normal” nights in lap dancing clubs, where the same sort of behaviour is re-enacted every day of the week, all over London.

Londonista 2018

<https://londonist.com/london/features/this-is-what-it-s-like-being-a-lap-dancer-in-london>

At each club's induction I am told that drugs aren't tolerated, but it becomes apparent that this is mostly lip service. I speak to several 'customers' who are actually **drug dealers**, one of whom tells me that he used to supply the management. One lap dancer tells me that when she started at a club in the City, the manager pointed out the resident drug dealer, to send customers to if they asked for anything. I'm often asked by customers if they can buy coke off me, or where they can get it from, so I imagine that the club sanctioned dealer does well.

At one of my auditions I meet two Spanish women in their early 20s. They tell me they left their last club because, "they treat us like shit. All the other girls are **sucking the manager's dick**, but if you don't suck his dick you have a hard time there." I ask if this is a euphemism. "No, they are really sucking his dick in the office." But why? "Because then they get treated better, with shifts and holidays."

I'm frequently asked **how much I charge for sex** — it seems to be taken as read that, as a lap dancer, I offer services outside the club. Some men are coy, asking, "would you do a lap dance in my hotel room?" Others blatantly ask me for a fuck.

On one occasion, a customer **bites my ear** so hard that I'm genuinely afraid his teeth will go right through it. It lasts about a minute and a half, and in that time, I sit there silently, afraid of aggravating the situation, and scared that if I pull away, my ear will rip.

A week later, **I'm bitten again**, this time on the shoulder. Again, it's a prolonged bite, and I'm afraid to move. Afterwards, the customer looks at the raised red circle made by his teeth and says,

Some clubs exploit the lap dancers financially, taking around 50% of the money they make, on top of the £20-£85 'house fee' the dancers pay to work there. It's possible to go home after an eight or 10-hour shift, having earned less than the minimum wage (**or literally nothing at all**). Performing on stage several times a night is compulsory but unpaid, so if the lap dancers don't earn any money from the customers, then they go home empty handed, despite providing the club with free entertainment — and having paid to work there.

In some clubs, this financial exploitation is compounded by **managers withholding payments** that a customer has made by card, keeping the sum (or part of it) for themselves.